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St. George's Hosp. Library
THE

HISTORY OF LITERATURE,

COMBINED WITH A VIEW OF THE FINE ARTS ;

OR,

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF LETTERS FROM
THE EARLIEST AGES OF ANTIQUITY TO THE
PRESENT TIME, CONSIDERING LANGUAGE, TRA-
CING WRITING, &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.



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&c. &c.

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PREFACE.

THE reasons which have induced the author to adopt this method of making known his History of Literature, and of soliciting the patronage of the nobility, gentry, and the lovers of polite learning, to enable him to bring it to a favourable conclusion, are as follows. It might be presumed by an individual well acquainted with and attached to literature, that a work so deeply interesting as a complete history of it, reviewing man himself both in a savage and civilized state, considering language in all its bearings, tracing writing through all its stages, and then, from the Oriental languages, developing in a continued stream, the flow of knowledge among mankind up to the present day, would have found among the publishing booksellers some, not only willing, but desirous of bringing such a work before the public ; but no, the directly contrary of this is the fact, for the author was told in the most supercilious manner by a bookseller, who may be, and he believes is, considered, the first in the City, “ that if it had been a novel, probably he might have published it, but being only a classical work, he could not think of such a thing.” The author

presumes that such, with other difficulties, induced Mr. Pope very properly to say in his preface, "I believe if any one early in his life should contemplate the dangerous fate of authors, he would scarce be of their number on any consideration." However, as the description given in Dr. Syntax's first Tour in search of the picturesque is quite apropos to the author's case, he has been strongly induced to give it insertion.

Description of the Bookseller;—

" He was a man whose ample paunch
 " Was made of beef, and ham, and haunch ;
 " And when he saw the slender form
 " Of Syntax, he began to storm."

Bookseller.

" I wish to know, sir, what you mean,
 " By kicking up, sir, such a scene ?
 " And who you are, sir, and your name,
 " And on what errand here you came ? "

Syntax.

" My errand was to bid you look
 " With care and candour on this book ;
 " And tell me whether you think fit
 " To buy, or print, or publish it."

The answer of the *Bookseller*, superlatively impertinent, concludes thus :

" So if you please you may retire,
 " And throw your book into the fire ;
 " You need not grin, my friend, nor vapour,
 " I would not buy it for waste paper."

Syntax.

“ Blockhead ! and is it thus you treat
 “ The men by whom you drink and eat ?
 “ Do you not know, and must I tell ye,
 “ ’Tis they fill out your monstrous belly ?
 “ Yes, booby, from such skulls as mine
 “ You lap your soup, and drink your wine,
 “ Without a single ray of sense
 “ But what relates to pounds and pence ;
 “ Thus good and evil form the whole—
 “ Heav’n gave you wealth, and me a soul,
 “ And I would never be an ass
 “ For all your gold with all your brass.”

When Syntax presents him with the nobleman’s letter, the cringing tradesman is then seen to perfection.

Bookseller.

“ Sir, had you shown the letter first,
 “ My very belly should have burst
 “ Before I would have said a word
 “ Your learned ears should not have heard ;
 “ My lord speaks highly of your merit,
 “ As of the talents you inherit :
 “ He writes himself supremely well ;
 “ His works are charming—‘ *for they sell.*’
 “ At length the Doctor’s parley ended ;
 “ I’m sure you think it can’t be mended.
 “ You well may laugh so loud, but I
 “ Feel myself more disposed to cry,
 “ When thus I see what asses sit
 “ In judgment upon works of wit.”

The author is satisfied that every dispassionate and discriminating observer must have remarked, that during the last two or three

years, the press* has actually groaned under the exertions used in placing before the public every kind of trash in the form of book or pamphlet which could vitiate or corrupt its taste ; a few of which are comprehended under the names of Mirrors, Olios, Legends of Terror, Encyclopædias, National, Family, and Cabinet Libraries, which on attentive perusal (independently of sometimes meeting with indifferent paper, and worse printing) appear to have only one advantage—that of presenting to the public rubbish in a more portable form ; for on carefully looking into their merits, they will be found to have many of the faults complained of by the admirable Lucian in his celebrated treatise, divided into criticism and precept, particularly, amplification of style, affectation of learned words, superfluity of epithets, and, by the natural consequence of so depraved a taste falling into the opposite extremes of trivial expression, low details, intermixed with gross misrepresentations ; in short, the epidemical corruption with which the Roman writers of the second century were attacked, is strongly illustrated at the present moment in England ; this, in the above works, may be in some measure, the necessary consequence of the variety and number of individuals employed to copy from other authors.

* In using the term “ Press ” the author does not allude either to the daily or weekly newspapers, or to the magazines, &c.

On mentioning some of these defects to the booksellers, the invariable answer has been, “There is at present a rage for such works, they have a great many subscribers, the books sell, and that is all we have to care about.”

So numerous are the disadvantages under which authors labour in their arrangements with the booksellers, that they prove a very great discouragement to literature ; the best arrangement made, is when a sum is offered at once for the manuscript ; it possesses this advantage, that however much below its value, it is certain. The second, is when the bookseller agrees to take the risk of printing, publishing, &c. and, after deducting the expenses, to divide the profits, if any, with the author ; this plan the author has found and experienced to be, a very bad one indeed, as he is entirely at the mercy of the bookseller. It may be asserted that in this case the bookseller has his character in danger ; it is not the case, for so difficult are the means of exposing and punishing him, that his reputation is not in any serious jeopardy, while the temptation is of the strongest kind : thus, at the end of twelve or eighteen months, the author has a right to demand a settlement of the account, or to see how matters stand ; he is compelled to rely implicitly on the statement given him. He knows of no plan by which he can ascertain with correctness the actual expenses

of printing and paper, or whether the work has sold or not ; if the case, by almost a miracle, should be plain that it has done so, the bookseller has only to assert that he has spent 60% or 70% in advertisements, and, by so doing, make a heavy deduction from the author's profits ; in short, if individuals possessing all the advantages of a classical education, rank, and fortune, sometimes forget themselves, it is too much to expect that a tradesman, with such inducements, should exhibit a pattern of moral rectitude. The third method is, for the author to publish his own work, and send it to the booksellers for sale, who very liberally charge for their commission only 25 per cent., or one-fourth of the amount sold.

A few of the difficulties under which his cotemporaries and himself labour, having now been pointed out by the author, he will endeavour to show how a remedy may effectually be applied to them. It is to the Royal Society of Literature, whose exertions, he trusts, will shortly be called forth in aid of classical and scientific authors, that he would wish respectfully to offer a few suggestions, which might, in time, render the Society famous, not only in Europe, but throughout the world, as an emporium for every kind of classical, scientific, and useful knowledge.

1st. That premises should be taken in a convenient neighbourhood in London, containing, besides others, two large rooms for printing and composing, with one handsome and commodious apartment for exhibiting the books when completed, after being bound on the premises or elsewhere.

2nd. That the public be given to understand that valuable works only, are brought out under the directions of the Society; and that they are welcome to purchase, at all reasonable hours, such works, at a moderate price, at the rooms of the Society; in order to prevent the charge of 25 per cent. made by the booksellers for selling, necessarily increasing their price.

3rd. That the Society take upon itself the charge of printing, publishing, and advertizing such manuscripts as may be approved of; and that when such works are sold, the expenses incurred to be first deducted, and the balance then to be divided; one half to go in aid of the funds of the Society, the other to the author; unless one-third should be considered sufficient for the funds of the Society: that the accounts be settled every six months, the honour of the Society being a sufficient guarantee for the strictest integrity.

4th. That two copies of every work published by the Society, should belong to it, in order to form a library for its members.

5th. That to carry the above suggestions into effect, a sum of money should be raised by subscription or otherwise, which at first need not exceed from 2 to 3,000*l*.

6th. That six Stanhope printing presses (which might be as many as the Society would at first require) be purchased, the cost of which at 60*l*. each would not

exceed 350*l.*, with 25 cwt. of new type at the average charge of 2*s.* a lb. which would amount to 280*l.* and allowing 50*l.* more for sundry expenses, the whole sum at first required would only come to 690*l.*

7th. That it would be necessary to appoint an individual as librarian, to live on the premises ; two others, properly qualified, to peruse and deliver in writing, in a given time, their opinions on the various MSS. submitted to them ; with a fourth to act as accountant, secretary, and treasurer to the Society ; the salaries of such individuals at first not to exceed 100*l.* or 120*l.* per annum.

The author is of opinion that a Society like the above, begun and continued on a system of prudence and economy, would not only be certain of success, but likewise confer a great obligation on the British people ; he is, at the same time, well aware, that it might be looked upon by some individuals as a monopoly ; such an idea would be perfectly incorrect, as it could only stand on its own merits, and by public approbation. Although it is naturally to be expected that individuals whose private and selfish interests were affected, would not scruple to attack it with all the virulence of mis-representation, and the absurdity of argument ; for his own part, he can only say, that it has been a great public misfortune, that such a protecting Society was not long ago established.

LONDON, *October*, 1831.

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N. B.—In the Complete Work the Author will give Specimens of the Alphabets of the Oriental Languages. It would have been very easy for him to have extended his subject much further than Three Volumes ; at the same time a judiciously concise Work, even of this kind, is more valuable to the Public in many respects.

THE
HISTORY OF LITERATURE,

&c. &c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE ADVANTAGES OF SCIENCE.

IN introducing to the attention of the public, but more particularly to the well-educated and accomplished class of society, a subject so extremely interesting as the History of Literature, or the rise and progress of letters and writing, from the earliest ages of antiquity to the present day, combined with a review of language itself, and a comparison between men in a savage and civilized state, &c. I presume it will be admitted, that it is hardly possible to employ our time in a more useful or instructive enquiry. In this comparatively enlightened and liberal age, when, by the aid of education and the assistance of the sciences, the human mind appears to be rapidly bursting through the degrading shackles of ignorance, and all ranks of society begin to appreciate the inestimable advantages of knowledge, I think that a concise work of this description may be of much advantage.

It is perhaps needless for me to assert, as it appears in a great measure self-evident, that a work like the present must have required a vast degree of careful research, strict enquiry, numerous consultations of ancient and modern authors, with much calm and dispassionate consideration, in order to prevent, as far as possible, all influence upon the mind, otherwise than sound reason, proofs, and probability, justified; which is the more necessary in a work like the present, intended, not only for constant reference, but also as a standard for public instruction.

The motive which first induced me to undertake this investigation, was an ardent desire for correct information, as there is hardly a propensity more powerful among human beings, than to supply their want of real knowledge by the fertility of their own conjectures; and as I proceeded, I felt not only charmed but amply repaid; indeed I always consider an individual, strongly attached to Literature, from the desire of mental improvement, as singularly fortunate; for, to use the words of the elegant Bigland, “The man of letters, when compared with one that is illiterate, exhibits nearly the same contrast as that which exists between a blind man and one that can see;” besides, there is not any way of laying out that most valuable of all things, time, to such advantage, particularly in youth. Birth and wealth are often the gifts of fortune, frequently bestowed upon the worthless and the un-

deserving ; but the man of learning has a merit peculiarly his own, the benefits of which he confers upon himself, in constantly having at his command one of those pure gratifications which, unlike other pleasures and indulgences, leave no sting behind, and which the world can neither destroy nor take away.

On the advantages of education and an acquaintance with science, so much has been said, and so much has been written, that it is not only extremely difficult, but perhaps unnecessary, to attempt to add any thing new ; the vast and almost incalculable advantages which knowledge possesses over ignorance is shown to a greater or less degree in every situation of life ; the grossly ignorant being found fitted only for the lowest gradations of human labour ;---indeed, man in this situation is but a savage, and appears very little, if at all, superior to the brutes ; while the comparatively learned professions require considerable attainments in science, success being often insured according to the degree of such attainments. I do not know an idea more foolish or absurd than the supposition and assertion, that education can, or is likely to be carried too far ; because it is like every human institution—frequently abused. In the first place, it is not sound reason to argue against what is excellent in itself from its occasional abuse ; and secondly, after granting every favourable opportunity, the number will generally, if not always, be extremely small, compared

with the great body, even in the most enlightened nation, who are not only able, but willing, to give up their time, inclination, and patience, in order to become soundly learned. So far from this being the case, the neglect of our opportunities in youth for the acquirement of knowledge is a misfortune often and deeply lamented ; when the cares and anxieties of life, with the hurry of business, have, in some measure put it out of our power to recall former slighted advantages ; at the same time it is a great encouragement to know, that many who (in what might well be considered later years) have begun and completed a prudent and judicious course of study, have not only become highly educated, but, by their writings and discoveries in science, done much to elevate and adorn society.

To pass our time in the study of the sciences, in learning what others have discovered, and in extending the bounds of human knowledge, has, in all ages of the world, been considered the most dignified and happy of human occupations ; and the name of philosopher, or lover of wisdom, is justly merited and given to those who lead such a life ; besides, the pleasures of science go hand in hand with the solid benefits derived from it ; for I do not think that there is any thing more calculated to elevate the mind, and fill it with generous and noble sentiments ; while, unlike other gratifications, they tend to make our lives not only more agreeable but better : so that a

rational being is bound, by every motive of interest and duty, to direct his faculties to pursuits, which are found to be the path of virtue as well as happiness.

CHAPTER II.

MAN IN A SAVAGE AND CIVILIZED STATE.

WHEN we consider the character of mankind, first, in the rudest, and secondly, in the most civilized state of society ; or, in other words, review the character of a savage, and that of a highly educated and polished man, we find that a human being, as he comes from the hand of nature, is every where the same. At his first appearance in infancy we can discover no quality which marks any distinction or superiority ; the capacity for improvement seems to be the same, and the talents he may afterwards acquire, as well as the virtues he may be rendered capable of exercising, depend entirely on the state of society in which he is placed ; to this state his mind naturally accommodates itself, and from it, receives its discipline and culture. In proportion to the wants which a human being is accustomed to feel, and the functions in which these engage him, his intellectual powers are

called forth; and according to the connections which the state of society establishes between him and the rest of his species, the affections of his heart are exerted. Or, in other words, man at his birth being the most helpless of all created beings, without speech, reason, or even instinct, not only is, but naturally becomes the child of imitation; the creature of habit and of circumstances. It is only by attention to this great and fixed principle, that we can ascertain with correctness the character of man in every period of his progress; it is this maxim, founded solely on fact and experience, which enables us clearly to account for the extraordinary differences which exist amongst the various nations of the world; it perfectly explains their attachment to idolatrous religion, barbarous customs, and foolish laws; for habit is not only a second, but in time becomes almost a part, of our nature. “Train up a child,” said the wise man, “in the way he should go, that he may not depart from it;” and train up nations in bad or improper systems, and they will not depart from them. They are very few, amongst the whole race of mankind, who are able, even with the advantage of knowledge, philosophy, and experience, to shake off the errors in which they have been brought up, more particularly if confirmed by long habit. I am aware that individuals, accustomed to look upon such a subject superficially, may consider this an erroneous system of reasoning;

but it only requires to be carefully studied to show its propriety.

When the philosopher and the scholar, educated amongst a highly civilized people, sits down calmly and dispassionately, first to consider, and then describe, human nature, his mind stored with the records of ancient and modern history, and combined with his own observations of the present time, he determines to be guided by the dictates of truth and observation. Hence the opinions of such an individual become extremely valuable, for they are the emanations of real knowledge; alike free from the dreams of enthusiasm, credulity, ignorance, and partiality; while they prove a source of useful instruction, by at once leading the mind, not only to the contemplation of a most interesting subject, but also into a chain of scientific and acute reasoning. The discovery of America, or the New World, in presenting states to our view, not only much less advanced than the most barbarous of the Old Continent, but man under the rudest form in which we can conceive him to exist, enables us, with certainty, to offer accurate opinions on this head. The thoughts and attention of a savage are found to be confined within the small circle of objects immediately conducive to his preservation or enjoyment; every thing beyond these escapes his observation, or is perfectly indifferent to him; like a mere animal, what is before his eyes interests and affects him, while that

which is out of sight or at a distance makes no impression ; he follows blindly the impulse of his appetite, but is entirely regardless of distant consequences, and even of those removed, in the least degree, from immediate apprehension. For instance :—on the approach of evening, when a Caribbee feels himself disposed to go to rest, no consideration will induce him to sell his hammock ; but, in the morning, on starting for the business or pastime of the day, he will part with it for the slightest toy that catches his fancy. At the close of winter, while the impression of what he has suffered from the rigor of the climate is fresh in the mind of the North American, he sets himself with diligence to prepare materials for erecting a comfortable hut to protect him against the inclemency of the ensuing season ; but, as soon as the weather becomes mild, he forgets the past, abandons his work, and never thinks of it till the return of the cold compels him, when too late, to resume the task. Thus, if in concerns the most necessary, and in appearance the most simple, the faculties of man, while rude and destitute of culture, differs so little from the thoughtless levity of children, and seems actually below the instinct of animals, its exertions, in other respects, cannot be very considerable.

Disquisitions which appear the most useful and important to men in one state of society, never occur to those in another. Among civilized nations, arithmetic,

or the art of numbering, is deemed an essential and elementary science ; and, in the Old World, the invention and use of it goes back to a period so remote, that it is beyond the reach of history ; but among savages who have no property to estimate, no treasures to count, no variety of objects to enumerate, arithmetic is a superfluous and useless art ; accordingly, among some tribes in America, it was found to be quite unknown ; many of them could not reckon more than three, others than ten and twenty ; but when they wished to convey an idea beyond these, they pointed to the hair of their heads, intimating that it could not be numbered ; in other respects, the understanding among rude nations is, if possible, still more limited. The first ideas of every human being must be those which he receives by the senses ; but in the mind of man, while in a savage state, there seems to be hardly any ideas but what enter by this avenue, the objects around him being presented to his eye ; such as may be subservient to his use, or can gratify his appetites, attract his notice ; the rest he views without curiosity or attention ; satisfied with looking upon them in that simple mode in which they appear to him, he neither combines them so as to form general classes, nor contemplates their qualities apart from the subject, nor bestows a thought upon the operations of his own mind concerning them ; thus he is unacquainted with all the ideas which have been denominated uni-

versal, or abstract, or of reflection, the range of his understanding being employed merely on what is sensible. This was so remarkably the case with the ruder nations of America, that their language had not words to express any thing but what was material or corporeal ; time, space, substance, and many other terms, which represent universal or abstract ideas, were altogether unknown to them ; their vacant countenances, their staring, unexpressive eyes, their lifeless inattention, and total ignorance of subjects which seem to be the first which should occupy the thoughts of rational creatures, made such an impression upon the Spaniards who first conquered them, that it required the authority of a Papal Bull* to convince them that those rude people were not an inferior order of beings, and entitled to the privileges of humanity. Since that period, individuals more enlightened and impartial than the discoverers or conquerors of America have taken an opportunity of contemplating the most savage of its inhabitants ; and they have been astonished and humbled, by observing how nearly man, in this condition, approaches to the brute creation. When we find, among savages, that reason is so much circumscribed in its exertions that it never arrives at high attainments, or at the knowledge of those general principles and maxims which serve as the foundation of science, we must conclude that the intellectual

* See Robertson's History of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 83.

powers of man, in such a rude state, are devoid of their proper object, and cannot acquire any considerable degree of vigor and enlargement. Indeed, it is very questionable whether such apparently slight glimmerings of reason are at all superior to the powers of instinct. If we compare the conduct of the North American already mentioned, in the erection of his hut, and turn to the labours of the bees in the formation of their cells, we find that instinct not only leads them to build their cells, but also to proceed in the mechanism upon the highest mathematical principles; that they work with a truth and correctness, which are quite perfect, in the most difficult branch of the most difficult science, on principles, at the knowledge of which man has only arrived, after ages and thousands of years of slow improvement; for this information was the after-fruits of Sir Isaac Newton's most wonderful discovery, a result, too, of which he himself was ignorant, as it was afterwards found out by one of his most celebrated followers. If we look further to the beavers and ants, we observe that they likewise build their dwellings on the same principles of mathematical correctness. On considering the feelings of strong attachment displayed by the dog, his sagacity and great powers of memory, which often enable him to recognise a stranger long after his master has forgotten him; when we view the something more, which, if not reason, is extremely like it, displayed by

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the elephant, it appears doubtful whether these animals are not in a more fortunate situation than the savage, whose reasoning powers are found to be at so low an ebb, that they do not point out to him the most common and necessary ideas of civilized life. Indeed, instinct is a word extremely difficult to define correctly ; for if we can tell where it begins, I do not think we can with certainty state where it ends. Dr. Johnson calls instinct a natural desire or aversion : if so, we certainly possess it ; but I would go further and say that it is a word applied as the director of all animals not gifted with the powers of speech.

Turning from this degrading, but true, description of human nature in a savage state, with what delight does the man of science trace the gradual increase of civilization and the arts among the civilized nations of antiquity, particularly the ancient Greeks and Romans. He perceives architecture proceeding from rudeness to comfort and neatness, then to elegance and beauty ; lastly, to grandeur and perfection ; statuary, from coarseness becoming so exquisite that it appears bursting into life ; language, at length arriving at a state so refined as to exhibit the most splendid productions of poetry, and the most sublime exertions of eloquence ; which, after the lapse of thousands of years, we are not only delighted to study and admire, but glad to imitate. The mind of man, thus assisted and directed, expands

to a degree far exceeding the powers of instinct, and to an extent which astonishes himself. At the same time, in all nations, and in all ages, even among the most enlightened and civilized states, the vast majority are content to receive instruction without taking the trouble of inquiry. That portion of the human species, incomparably the most numerous, whose lot is labour, whose principal, and almost sole, occupation is to secure subsistence, views the arrangements and operations of nature with little reflection, having neither leisure nor inclination for entering into that part of refined and intricate speculation, which conducts us to the knowledge of the principles of government, of policy, and laws ; the advantages of religion and morality ; with the duties which we owe to ourselves as individuals, and to each other as members of society. It has been the want of such knowledge, where religion was concerned, which has given rise to all those dreams of madness and enthusiasm, fostered by ignorance and superstition, which have so long tormented the human race ; and, regarding politics and government, the same cause has been the origin of those tumults, violence, and bloodshed, which have, in turn, desolated almost every part of the habitable globe. But when we have obtained the above information, and can apply to it useful purposes, namely, the happiness and prosperity of each other. Man then admirably fills his station as the first and noblest of created beings.

CHAPTER III.

LANGUAGE AND GRAMMAR.

LANGUAGE, in general, signifies the expression of our ideas by certain articulate sounds, which are used as signs of those ideas. By articulate sounds are meant those modulations of simple voice, or of sound emitted from the thorax, formed and modulated by means of the mouth with its several organs, the teeth, tongue, lips, and palate. This method of communicating thought, we now behold carried to the highest perfection. Language is become a vehicle by which the most delicate and refined emotions of one mind can be transmitted to another. In this state it was found among the ancient Greeks and Romans considerably upwards of two thousand years ago. At length it has become so familiar, that like the expanse of the firmament, and other great objects to which we are accustomed, we view it without wonder.

If we carry our thoughts back to the first dawn of language among mankind, and reflect upon the feeble beginnings from which it must have arisen, the numerous and great obstacles which it must have encountered in its progress, there certainly appears no invention entitled

to an equal share of admiration, which too, must have been the production of the first and rudest ages ; if in the absence of all better information, it can be considered as a human invention at all. When we think of the circumstances when language began to be formed, that men were a wandering scattered race, little society among them except that of families, it is difficult to conceive how any one set of sounds or words could be agreed on as the signs of their ideas ; and it is still more difficult to imagine how society could form itself previously to language, or how words, could rise into language previously to society being formed. But supposing, on the other hand, language to be of Divine origin, we have only a right to believe, nay it is perfectly evident from the analysis of it, that a perfect system was not given at once to man. For I have already mentioned, in the preceding chapter, that the languages of the ruder tribes of America have no words to express any thing but what is material or corporeal ; time, space, substance, and many other terms which represent universal or abstract ideas, being altogether unknown ; and this will be more fully shown as I proceed. Besides, reasoning from experience and analogy, we know that the first rudiments of speech, in all infant and ignorant colonies, are exceedingly poor and narrow, and that the ancient Greeks and Romans gradually improved and perfected their languages, as civilization advanced

among them ; although, principally by the assistance of letters, we are now at full liberty to enquire in what manner, or by what steps, language has advanced to the state in which now find it.

If we suppose a period before any words were invented or known, it is clear that men could have no other method of communicating their feelings to each other, but by cries expressive of pleasure or pain ; for these are signs which nature teaches all men, and which are understood by all. Such exclamations, called by grammarians, interjections, uttered in a strong and passionate voice, were, therefore, the first elements or beginnings of speech. When more enlarged communication became necessary, and names began to be assigned to different objects, in what manner can we suppose men to have proceeded in this assignation of names, or invention of words ? undoubtedly by imitating as much as they could the nature of the object which they named, by the sound of the name which they gave it. In the same way as a painter, who would represent grass, must employ a green colour ; so, in the beginning of language, one giving a name to any thing harsh or boisterous, would of course employ a harsh or boisterous sound. To suppose words invented, or names given to things, in a manner purely arbitrary, without any ground or reason, is to suppose an effect without a cause. On the contrary, nothing was more natural than to imitate by the sound

of the voice, the quality of the sound or noise which any external object made, and to form its name accordingly. Thus, in all languages, we find a multitude of words, evidently constructed upon this principle. A certain bird is turned a cuckoo from the sound which it emits; another is called the humming bird for the same reason; when one sort of wind is said to whistle, and another to roar; when a serpent is said to hiss; a fly, to buzz; and falling timber to crash; when a stream is said to flow, and hail to rattle; when a cow is said to low, a horse to neigh, a dog to bark, and a cat to mew, the analogy between the word and the thing signified is plainly discernable. In the names of objects which address the sight only, and in the terms appropriated to moral ideas, many learned men have been of opinion that, in every language, the terms significant of them, are derived from the names of sensible objects to which they are conceived analogous; and, by this natural mechanism they imagine all languages to have been at first constructed, and the roots of their capital words formed.

When we attend to the order in which words are arranged in a sentence, we find a remarkable difference between the ancient and modern tongues. The consideration of this will serve further to unfold the genius of language, and to show the causes of those alterations which it has undergone in the progress of time and of society. Let us figure to ourselves a savage who beholds

some object, such as fruit, which raises his desire, and who requests another to give it him ; supposing him to be unacquainted with words, he would labour to make himself understood by pointing earnestly at the object, probably with other gesticulations, and by uttering a passionate cry. Presuming him, on the other hand, to have acquired words, the first he uttered would be the name of the object he desired. He would not express himself according to our English order of construction, “ Give me fruit,” but according to the Latin order, “ *Fructum da mihi*, Fruit give to me,” for this plain reason, that his attention was wholly directed towards the fruit. This, which is the natural order, we find is the manner in which words are arranged, not only in the Greek and Latin, but in most of the ancient tongues. The modern languages of Europe, however, have adopted a different arrangement ; they place first in the sentence the person or thing which speaks or acts ; next, its action ; and lastly, the object of its action ; which is considered the order of propriety and of time. The Latin order is more animated ; the English more clear and distinct. The ancients arranged their words according to the order in which the ideas rose in their imagination. We arrange them according to the order in which the understanding directs them to be placed, from the necessary consequence of greater refinement in the art of speech.

I shall now consider the pronunciation and styles of

language depending upon the inflexions of the voice, gesture, and a figurative manner. Inflexions of the voice are so natural, that to some nations it has appeared easier to express different ideas by varying the tone with which they pronounced the same word, than to contrive words for all their ideas. This is particularly the case with the Chinese; the number of words in their language is said not to be great, but, in speaking, they vary each on no less than five different tones, by which the same word is made to signify five different things, which gives a great appearance of singing to their speech.* In the Greek and Latin languages this musical pronunciation was also retained to a great degree; they not only spoke with stronger inflexions of voice than we use, but the quantity of their syllables was also much more fixed than in the modern languages, and rendered more sensible to the ear in speaking; besides quantity, or the difference between short and long, accents were placed upon most of their syllables,—the acute, grave, and circumflex, which determined the rising or falling of the voice. The declamation of their orators, and the pronunciation of their actors upon the stage, approached to the nature of a recitative in music, was capable of being marked in notes, and supported with instruments. Hence Aristotle in his poetics considers the music of tragedy as one of its most essential parts.

* See Blair on the Belles Lettres.

GESTURE.—Action is treated of, by all the ancient critics, as one of the chief qualities in every public speaker, and it was carried to a much greater height both at Greece and Rome than we are accustomed to in modern times. Roscius to us would have seemed a madman; we learn from Cicero that it was a contest between him and that great actor, whether he could express a sentiment in a greater variety of phrases, or Roscius in a greater variety of intelligible and significant gestures. At length gesture came to engross the stage wholly; for under the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, the favorite entertainment of the public was the pantomime, which was carried on entirely by mute gesticulation; the people were moved and wept at it as at tragedies; and the passion, for it became so strong, that laws were made to restrain the senators from studying the pantomimic art. In the present day our plain, or what the ancients would call monotonous way of speaking, express the passions and feelings with sufficient energy to move us, who are not accustomed to a very vehement style of language.

FIGURATIVE MANNER OF SPEECH.—It has been, and is still common to call this style the Oriental, from the supposition that it was peculiar to the nations of the East. Whereas from the American style, and many others, it plainly appears not to have been peculiar to any region or climate, but to have been

common to all nations in certain periods of their society and language. This statement is confirmed by undoubted facts. The style of all the most early languages among states in their first and rude æras, is found without exception to be full of figures, hyperbolical, and picturesque in a high degree. The Iroquois, Illinois, and the nations of Canada carry on their treaties, and public transactions, with great pomp of style and the boldest metaphors. Another remarkable instance is the style of the Old Testament, which is carried on like all other languages; when advanced only to a certain state by constant allusions to sensible objects; iniquity being expressed by a spotted garment, misery by drinking the cup of astonishment, vain pursuits by feeding on ashes, and the like in innumerable instances. We are apt, upon a superficial view, to imagine, that such modes of expression are among the chief refinements of speech, not invented till language had advanced to its later periods, and then, that they were devised by orators and rhetoricians. The directly contrary of this is the truth; mankind never employed so many figures of speech as when they had few words for expressing their meaning; for it was the want of proper names for every object, that obliged them to use one name for many; as a matter following of course, to express themselves by comparisons, metaphors, allusions, and all those substituted forms of speech

which render language figurative; while it was perfectly natural, from the mechanism of language itself, that in phrases on the dispositions of the mind, moral and intellectual ideas, they should at first be drawn or expressed by comparisons with the sensible and material objects around them. In the present day, when language has arrived at such a high degree of perfection, and become so extremely copious, an individual using a strongly figurative style, would be looked upon as foolish and absurd, or laughed at for ridiculous bombast. Thus, although our modern languages may be considered as less animated than those of the ancients, they are far more chaste and elegant.

I have now shown the natural progress of language in its material points. It appears that it was first barren in words, but descriptive by the sound, and expressive in the manner of uttering them; by the aid of significant tones and gestures, a figurative and poetical style, a fanciful and lively arrangement. It has at length proceeded from sterility to copiousness, from vivacity to accuracy, from fire and enthusiasm to coolness and precision. Those characters of early language, descriptive sound, vehement tones and gestures, figurative style, and inverted arrangement all hanging together, had a mutual influence on each other; and have gradually given place to arbitrary sounds, calm pronunciation, simple style, and plain arrangement. Language has

become, in modern times, more accurate and correct, but less striking and fanciful ; in its ancient state more favourable to poetry and oratory ; in its present, to reason and philosophy.

GRAMMAR.—Grammar is the art of speaking and writing language correctly, by the following fixed and general rules :

- 1st. Orthography, which teaches the nature and powers of letters, and the just method of spelling words.
- 2nd. Etymology, or analogy, which treats of the different kinds of words, their various modifications, and their derivation.
- 3rd. Syntax, which shows the agreement and construction of words in a sentence.
- 4th. Prosody, which consists of two parts ; the first teaches the proper pronunciation of words, comprising accent, quantity, emphasis, pause, and tone ; the second, the laws and measure of verse.

The most simple division of the parts of speech is into substantives, attributes, and connectives. I shall, however, for the sake of illustration, review them in the common number. The chief and fundamental rules of syntax are common to the Latin as well as to the English ; and, indeed, belong equally to all languages ; for in all, the parts which compose speech are essentially

the same. In proceeding to give a short sketch of the division of language, or what is abstractedly meant by the different parts of speech, I shall consider them in their natural order. In teaching, it should be brought to the memory of the individual, that the first sounds or words uttered by his younger relatives were those expressive of pleasure or pain; as oh! eh! la! which words grammarians have agreed to call *Interjections*, or sudden exclamations. The next sounds or words used were papa, mamma, brother, sister, &c., which are called *nouns* or *substantives*, which signify things; but the child soon begins to use other words, as run, fly, drink, &c. expressing motion or action, which are called *verbs*; and, by means of a noun and a verb, he is able to say almost any thing; thus, fire burns, mamma comes, papa runs. The child soon finds occasion to express the sense which different nouns convey to his mind; as hot fire, kind mamma, good papa: which words, hot, kind, good, are called *adnouns* or *adjectives*, as belonging to, or qualifying, the thing spoken of.

The next effort of the child to express himself will be to qualify the verb, or action; so, papa runs fast, mamma comes soon, stroke puss softly, which words, fast, soon, and softly, are called *adverbs*. He will then have occasion to describe the position of nouns to each other; as, to papa, from mamma, with nurse: the words to, from, with, are called *prepositions*. To avoid the

too frequent repetition of nouns in speaking, the child finds that, instead of saying, brother hurts Alfred, he should say, he hurts me : which words, he and me, being used for nouns, are called *pronouns*. The child now finds that he is able to express himself on all subjects ; the two remaining parts of speech, the article and conjunction, being refinements, and not common to language in a rude state.

It frequently becomes necessary to determine whether we speak of a particular man, or of man in general ; therefore we say, a man, or, the man, which little words a and the, are called articles ; because, being prefixed to substantives, they show how far their signification extends. In a formal speech or discourse, it becomes necessary to join sentences together, by the introduction of words which indicate their connexion with each other ; such as, if, though, yet, &c. : these are called conjunctions. The acquirement and judicious use of this part of speech is the last thing attained in the study of language.

Thus, from an analysis of language it appears quite evident, that its division into different parts of speech is perfectly natural and proper. In our own and other languages, such as the French and Italian, there are nine different parts of speech. The article, the noun or substantive, the adnoun or adjective, the pronoun, the verb, the adverb, the preposition, the interjection, and

the conjunction. The Latin has only eight parts of speech, wanting the article, which is supplied, to a certain extent, by the alterations in the terminations of the nouns, &c. The French include the adverb, preposition, interjection, and conjunction, under the denomination of particles, because they are invariable, and admit of no diversity of grammatic forms. They, however, class them as follows. Adverbial particles, which are commonly joined to verbs to denote, with more energy, some circumstance or manner of their signification. Prepositive particles, placed before substantives, to express some relation between them and the preceding word. Interjective particles, so called because they are introduced in the discourse to indicate a sudden passion or emotion of the mind; and conjunctive particles, which serve to connect words, phrases and sentences, so as to show their dependence upon one another. Unfortunately, grammar, which is a dry subject in itself, is often, if not generally, taught in such a confused manner, that many individuals, apparently with a fair education, never seem thoroughly to understand it.

CHAPTER IV.

ON WRITING.

AFTER language, writing is, beyond doubt, the most useful art which men possess: the noblest and most beneficial invention which human ingenuity can boast of with certainty. To whom mankind is indebted for this sublime and refined discovery does not clearly appear. Concealed by the darkness of remote antiquity, the great inventor is deprived of those honours which would still be paid to his memory by all the lovers of knowledge and learning. The first essays of this art, which has contributed more than any other to the improvement of the human species, were like those of speech—very rude. It also advanced towards perfection slowly and by gradual progression.

By writing, we understand certain marks or characters presented to the eye, enabling individuals, when absent, to hold communication with each other. It is considered an improvement on speech, and, therefore, must have been posterior to it in the order of time. At first, men thought of nothing further than communicating their thoughts to each other, when present, by means of sounds or words; afterwards, they devised this method of writing. Written characters are of two sorts: they are either signs for things, or signs for words. Of the

former, are the pictures, hieroglyphics, and symbols, employed by the ancient nations ; of the latter, are the alphabetical characters now in use among the Europeans ; these two kinds of writing are essentially distinct.

Pictures were undoubtedly the first essay towards writing. Imitation is so natural to man, that in all ages and among all nations, some plans have been attempted, however poor and rude, of endeavouring to copy or trace the likeness of sensible objects. When the warrior, eager for fame, wished to transmit some knowledge of his exploits to succeeding ages, or the gratitude of a people to their sovereign ; prompted them to hand down to posterity an account of his beneficent deeds ; the first method of accomplishing this that seems to have occurred to them, was to delineate, in the best manner they could, figures representing the action of which they were solicitous to preserve the memory. This, which has very properly been called picture-writing, was in use among the Americans when that country was discovered ; and traces of it were observed through their various tribes. It appears, that when the Spaniards visited South America under Cortes, A. D. 1519, the painters in the train of Montezuma's ambassadors conveyed the intelligence to him, by delineating or drawing on white cotton cloth, their ships, horses, artillery, arms, &c. Compared with the awkward attempts of their savage countrymen, the paintings of the

Mexicans may be considered as works of composition and design. They were not acquainted, however, with any other method of recording transactions than that of delineating the objects which they wished to represent. But they could exhibit a more complex series of events in progressive order, describing, by a proper disposition of figures, the occurrences of a king's reign, from his accession to his decease. The style of all their paintings was the same ; they represented things, not words ; exhibiting images to the eye, not ideas to the understanding ; they may, therefore, be considered as the earliest and most imperfect attempt of men in their progress towards the art of writing ; the defects in this mode of recording transactions must have been deeply felt ; to paint every occurrence was, from its nature, a very tedious operation, and as events multiplied, its annals must have swelled to an enormous bulk ; the necessity of improving it would have sharpened invention ; and the human mind, holding the same course in the New World as in the Old, might, in time, have advanced by the same successive steps ;—1st. From an actual picture to the plain hieroglyphic ; 2nd. To the allegorical symbol ; 3rd. To the arbitrary character for syllables ; and lastly, until an alphabet of letters was discovered, then formed, capable of expressing all the various combinations of sound or words employed in speech. It appears that the Mexicans, the most civil-

ized people of America, when their country was discovered, were making some rude attempts at the hieroglyphic characters ; but the short duration of their empire prevented them from advancing further in that long course, which conducts men from the labour of painting objects to the simplicity and ease of alphabetical writing. For when Cortes invaded the country, Montezuma was only the ninth monarch in succession who had swayed the Mexican sceptre, not by hereditary right, but by election ; and Mexico, from the best accounts handed down to us, does not appear to have been founded more than 270 years before the Spaniards invaded it. I have thought it proper to take a view of the attempts made among the Americans before I proceeded to those of the Old World, for the reason that I stated in Chapter II. “ That man being there presented under the rudest form in which we can conceive him to exist, it enabled me, with more certainty, to offer accurate opinions.”

To supply, in some measure, the defect, the tedium, and the insufficiency of picture writing, the ancient Chaldeans or Egyptians invented the hieroglyphic characters, upwards of two thousand years before the Christian æra, which is considered the second stage of the art of writing. They were first made to stand for visible, but shortly afterwards, in the third stage, the allegorical symbol for invisible objects. The Mexicans, who had made some slight advances to these cha-

racters, uniformly represented a conquered town, by a rude delineation of a house ; a target, ornamented with darts, described a monarch who had enlarged his dominions by force of arms. But Egypt was the country where the above sort of writing was most studied and brought to a regular art. The great distinction between picture writing, hieroglyphics, and allegorical symbols is, that pictures delineated the resemblance of external visible objects, hieroglyphics painted invisible objects, by analogies taken from the external world ; exactly in the same manner as that which is called the oriental or figurative style of language, when in a rude state, employed sensible objects to represent moral and intellectual ideas and feelings. Thus, an eye was the hieroglyphical symbol for knowledge, a circle of eternity ; ingratitude was denominated by a viper ; imprudence by a fly ; wisdom by an ant ; victory by a hawk ; a dutiful child by a stork ; a man universally shunned by an eel. Sometimes they joined together two or more of these characters ; such as a serpent with a hawk's head, to denote nature with God presiding over it. It has been supposed that hieroglyphics were the invention of the Egyptian priests, in order to conceal their learning from the public view, and that it was preferred by them to the alphabetical mode of writing ; but this is certainly a mistake. At first they were used from necessity, not from choice ; although they were afterwards retained by

them as a sacred kind of writing, serving to give an air of mystery to their learning and religion. It is stated by Clemens Alexandrinus, that those who were educated among the Egyptians learned first the epistolographic, or common ; secondly, the hieratic, which the sacred scribes employed ; and lastly, the hieroglyphic, of which there were two kinds, the one denoting objects in a direct manner, the other symbolical. Writing continued to advance from symbols of things invisible, to simple arbitrary marks, which stood for objects, though without any resemblance or analogy to the objects signified. The Peruvians were found to practice this method, by the use of small cords of different colours ; by knots upon them of various sizes and differently arranged, they contrived to give information, and communicate their thoughts to each other. Of this nature, also, are the written characters in use among the Chinese at the present day ; they have no alphabet of letters or simple sounds composing their words ; but every single character which they use in writing is significant of an idea ; it is a mark which stands for a thing or object ; in consequence, the number of these must be immense, as they must correspond to the whole number of ideas which they have occasion to express ; in fact, they will be far greater than the number of words in their language ; for I mentioned before, that by varying a word on five different tones, they made it

signify five different things. They are said to have upwards of 70,000 written characters; to read and write them to perfection is the study of a whole life, and perfectly accounts for the very trifling progress which the Chinese are found to have made in real science. Attached to old habits, or repelled from imitation by the contempt for improvement which usually attaches to ignorance, the people of that vast empire refuse to adopt the grammatical advantages of Europe, which would lead them to analyse their written speech into its alphabetical elements. It appears that the Japanese, Tonquinese, and Coreans, who speak different languages from one another, and from the inhabitants of China, use the same written characters, and by that means correspond intelligibly with each other; a plain proof that the Chinese characters are like hieroglyphics,---signs of things not of words. We have still an instance of this sort of writing in Europe—our arithmetical figures 1, 2, 3, 4, &c., which we derived from the Arabians; they have no dependence on words, but each figure denotes an object, the number for which it stands; accordingly, on being presented to the eye, it is equally understood by all nations, who have agreed in the use of these ciphers; Italians, Spaniards, French, and English, however different their languages may be, and whatever names they give, in their respective tongues to each numerical cipher.

The next step in the progress of writing, was the invention of an alphabet of syllables, among some of the ancient nations, which is said to be retained to this day in Ethiopia and some countries of India. By fixing upon a particular mark or character for every syllable in a language, the number of characters necessary to be used in writing was reduced within a much smaller compass than the number of words ; still, however, the number of characters being great, must have continued to render reading and writing very laborious arts, till, at length, some happy genius arose, and tracing the sounds made by the human voice to their most simple elements, reduced them to a very few vowels and consonants ; and, by affixing to each the signs which we now call letters, taught mankind how, by their combinations, to put in writing all the different words or variations of sound which they employed in speech ; by being reduced to this simplicity, the art of writing was brought to its highest state of perfection, and in this situation we now enjoy the advantages of it in all the countries of Europe. To whom we are indebted for this refined and invaluable discovery, we are obliged to admit is not known with certainty ; Memnon, the Egyptian, is said to have been the inventor of letters, about 1820 years before the Christian æra ; and Plato (in *Phædo*) expressly attributes the invention to an Egyptian ; at all events, the ancient Egyptians have a

much better claim to the honour of this invention, than any other nation with whose history we are acquainted; unfortunately, however, in the long lapse of ages, the destruction of records, and the wreck of literature, the Coptic, or ancient Egyptian language, was so entirely lost, that little more than the name of it was known, until the late M. de la Crose, to whom the learned world is much indebted, composed a Coptic grammar and dictionary, and, by so doing, has re-established the language; the alphabet has thirty-two letters; but the characters are almost entirely Greek. The universal tradition among the ancients is, that Cadmus, the Phœnician, when he founded Thebes, according to Blair's Chronology, 1493 years before Christ, introduced the first sixteen letters of the alphabet into Greece, according to the above system of chronology, contemporary with Moses; according to Sir Isaac Newton's system of 1045 years before the Christian æra, contemporary with king David. It appears, however, from the books of Moses, that letters were known among the Jews about this time; and, as Moses was carefully educated in all the learning of the Egyptians by Pharaoh's daughter, there can be little doubt but that he introduced the knowledge of letters among his countrymen which he had derived from the Egyptians. Cadmus himself, who is said to have been born at Thebes in Egypt, and afterwards settled in Phœnicia, is never stated to have

brought across the Mediterranean more than the first sixteen letters of what then became the Greek alphabet, when he founded Thebes in Greece. The remaining letters were not added till intervals of hundreds of years had elapsed ; consequently, the alphabet must long have remained very imperfect ; and, as all our knowledge of Gentile history must be derived from the Greeks, I shall, in a future chapter, when I trace the rise and progress of Greek literature, carefully attend to the exact period when their alphabet was completed. It is curious to observe, that the letters which we use at this day can be traced back to the alphabet of Cadmus. The Roman alphabet, which remains with us and with most of the European nations, is plainly founded on the Greek, as the Greek is now found to have been on the Egyptian ; this is extremely natural ; the Greeks having copied from the Egyptians, and the Romans from the Greeks ; it is observed by learned men, that the Greek characters especially, according to the manner in which they are formed in the oldest inscriptions, have a remarkable conformity with the Hebrew ; and, by inverting them from right to left, according to the Phœnician, they are all three nearly the same. The names or denominations of the letters, Alpha, Beta, &c., and the order in which they are arranged in the several alphabets, Phœnician, Hebrew, Greek, and Roman, amounts to a demonstration, that they were all originally derived from the same

source ; an invention so valuable and simple was greedily received by mankind, and propagated with speed and facility through different nations. The letters were originally written from the right hand towards the left ; this was the manner among the Assyrians, Phoenicians, Hebrews, Arabians, and, at first, among the Greeks ; afterwards the Greeks adopted a new method, writing their lines alternately from right to left, and from left to right, which was called *Boustrophedon*, after the way in which oxen plough the ground ; this was the method in the time of Solon ; at length the motion from left to right being considered the most commodious, the practice prevailed throughout all the countries of Europe,

Writing was for ages a kind of engraving ; the most ancient materials were pillars and obelisks, tables of stone and bricks. On tables of stone were written the Ten Commandments, and the blessings and cursings inculcated in the laws of Moses* ; then followed plates of brass and wooden tablets. In proportion as writing became more common, lighter and more portable substances were employed ; such as the inner bark, and leaves of trees. About the time of Alexander the Great, paper first began to be manufactured from the Egyptian plant, or reed, called papyrus ; the use of parchment, or the art of preparing skins for writing, was not discovered till the time of Eumenes, king of

* See Deuteronomy.

Pergamus, 192 years before the Christian æra, hence called *Pergamena*, *Charta*, vel *Membrana* ;* most of the ancient manuscripts which remain are written on parchment, very few on papyrus. The Romans, in the later times of the republic, wrote, in common, on tablets of wood, covered with a thin coat of wax, with a stylus, or pen of iron ; and, on papyrus, or parchment, with a small reed, cut and made in the same manner as our pens in the present day. When Egypt fell under the dominion of the Arabs in the seventh century, the manufacture of paper from the papyrus ceased ; the art of making paper from silk or cotton was invented in the East, about the beginning of the tenth century ; and, in imitation of it from linen rags, in the fourteenth century. Coarse brown paper was first manufactured in England, at Dartford, in Kent, A. D. 1588.

I have now given a short account of these two great arts, language and writing, which are truly the foundation stones of all science, learning, and improvement. I shall conclude, by comparing, in a few words, spoken and written language. The advantages of writing over speech are, that writing is a more extensive and a more permanent method of communication ; more extensive, as it is not confined within the narrow circle of those who hear our words ; for, by means of written characters, we can send our thoughts abroad,

* The skins of calves are called vellum.

and speak in the most distant regions of the world ;— more permanent, also, as it prolongs this voice to the most distant ages, giving us the means of recording our sentiments to futurity, and of perpetuating the instructive memory of past transactions. It likewise affords this advantage to such as read, above such as hear ; that, having the written characters before their eyes, they can arrest the sense of the writer ; they can pause, and compare at their leisure, one passage with another ; whereas the voice is fugitive and passing ;— we must catch the words the moment they are uttered, or we lose them for ever. Although the advantages of written language are so great, that speech without writing would have been very inadequate for the instruction of mankind ; yet we must not forget, that spoken, has a great advantage over written language, in point of energy and force ; the voice of the living speaker makes an impression upon the mind much stronger than can be made by the perusal of any writing ; tones, looks, and gestures, being natural interpreters of the mind, which remove ambiguities, enforce impressions, and operate on us by means of sympathy, which is one of the most powerful instruments of persuasion ; hence, though writing may and does answer the grand purpose of instruction, all the high efforts of eloquence must be made by means of spoken, not of written language.

CHAPTER V.

THE ORIENTAL LANGUAGES, WITH PREPARATORY OBSERVATIONS.

ALTHOUGH the creation of the world is fixed by chronologists at 4004* years before the Christian æra, we are not only quite ignorant of the language spoken by our first parents, but also whether it was of divine origin, or of human invention; many of the greatest authors and most learned men of ancient and modern times have after careful research and mature deliberation, disagreed, and come to opposite conclusions on this head; it appears to be attended with such extreme difficulty, that the more fully we consider it the more difficult it appears to hazard a decided opinion. If we ease our scruples by at once placing it on the side of divine origin, we are perfectly certain that only the rudiments of speech, even in this case, were granted to man; for we find that language never made any progress towards perfection till the art of writing was discovered;

* The 1825 year, A. D., according to Usher and Blair, is the year of the world 5829

According to Scaliger	5774 dif.	55.
According to the Julian period	6538 —	709.
According to the Jewish computation	5586 —	243.
According to the modern Greek calendar	7333 —	1504.

and this art, which we know to be of human invention, has at length perfected language. From the beginning of the world, till about 115 years after the deluge, we are destitute of even a shadow of any thing like proof, to inform us what was the first or original language spoken by mankind; until we arrive at the period of Oriental languages, we are completely in the dark, and have nothing on this subject which is at all to be depended upon; and if we turn to Sacred Revelation, we are simply told in the first verse of the eleventh chapter of Genesis, “That the whole earth was of one language and of one speech;” but of what language or of what speech is left to conjecture. Unfortunately, the most ancient records are generally scanty and fabulous; the first steps by which nations advanced towards maturity are generally unknown; and of some of the greatest natural commotions which ever agitated the terrestrial globe, nothing can now be discovered but their remaining effects; this want of materials contracts the reward of the inquirer, but rather increases than diminishes his labour; if the complete history of universal nature was extant, persevering industry might reduce it to a compendium; but to discover clearly the facts which are concealed by the veil of allegorical fiction; to supply by happy conjecture the want of authentic evidence; and to unite the scattered fragments of truth which might thus be brought to light, so as to form them into

one perfect and harmonious system, is a task which must prove too arduous for the most transcendent human abilities. Enough, may, however still be collected, which has escaped the ravages of time; to produce a rich supply of instruction, we must, to the various difficulties which we have to encounter, oppose the best precautions in our power, by contenting ourselves within the limits of real knowledge; rather choosing at once to confess our ignorance, than to give to mere opinions the authority of facts.

The first accounts, having claims to probability, of the language and literature of mankind, begins a considerable time after the dispersion or migration from the plains of Shinar; when men, after the deluge, began to be multiplied, great changes were soon effected; and colonies went forth from time to time, from whence ensued a mixture of people and languages, without questioning, for a moment, the miracle which we are told caused a confusion of speech; I shall content myself with remarking, that difference of language was an event extremely natural and likely to take place, and was almost a necessary consequence of extensive migration; for we find, in the present day, considerable varieties of speech in the different provinces of the same country; and, until a people enjoy the advantages of writing and literature, their language is never found either to remain stationary, or to advance to any degree

of perfection ; for instance : our own language, both in its orthography and pronunciation, is very different from what it was only two centuries and a half ago. I am afraid that few of us are aware of the large debt of gratitude due, by this country, to the late Dr. Johnson, who, in his Dictionary fixed a standard for the English language. We are informed, in ancient history, that Noah, in the 930th year of his age, and in the 1986th year after the Creation, divided the world between his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet ; that Shem had nearly all Asia, Ham the large continent of Africa, and Japhet Europe, with some provinces of Asia Minor. Of the New World, or the immense continent of North and South America, larger than either Europe, Asia, or Africa, and not much inferior to a third part of the habitable globe, discovered by Columbus, A. D. 1492, and 3510 years after the above division, we are utterly ignorant either how it was divided or peopled ; for both sacred and profane history are totally silent on the subject. When the nations of Europe unexpectedly discovered a new world, which they never conceived to exist, removed at a vast distance from every part of the ancient continent which was then known, filled with inhabitants whose appearance and manners differed remarkably from the rest of the human species, the question of their origin naturally became an object of curiosity and attention ; the theories and speculations of ingenious men

on this subject would fill many volumes ; but were often so wild and chimerical, that it would be a mere waste of time to attempt to enumerate them ; such regions of conjecture and controversy belong not to the historian, his being a more limited province, confined to what is established by certain, or, at least highly probable evidence, on the subject of America until it was discovered, how, or in what manner, or by whom it was originally peopled, I am obliged to confess that we are entirely ignorant. To return to the ancient world,—when Noah had divided it between his three sons, in the manner above mentioned, the children of Chus, the son of Ham, would not submit to such division ; for Nimrod, who first took upon himself the regal, or kingly dignity, drove Ashur, one of the sons of Shem, from his territories, and forced him to take refuge in the higher parts of Mesopotamia ; these dominions they held for a considerable time ; but were at length attacked, and driven by the united efforts of the sons of Shem, from the plains of Chaldea and Babylon ; from whence they were dispersed among various nations. There are two memorable occurrences in ancient history which must not be confounded together ; the first is the general migration from the plains of Shinar ; the second is the dispersion of the Cuthites, or sons of Chus, as I have just stated. All the nations who preserved memorials of the deluge, have referred to it as the highest point to which their

antiquity could ascend: it was esteemed the renewal of the world; the new birth of mankind; and the *ultimatum* of Gentile history; we therefore find, that Noah is often mentioned in the genealogy of Gentile princes; and, in after times, he was looked up to, not only as the father of mankind, but also as a real monarch: consequently the names by which he was distinguished are numerous; such as Prometheus, Deucalian, Atlas, Theuth, Zuth, Xuthus, Inachus, Osiris, and Zeus. He was looked up to as the planter of the vine, and the inventor of fermented liquors; whence he was denominated Zeuth, which signifies, ferment; rendered Zeus by the Greeks.

The most celebrated of the ancient historians who exhibit in their writings extracts of the deluge, are Abydenus, who copied from the archives of the Babylonians and Persians, Eusebius, Plutarch, and Lucian. The latter is considered to give the best account, as it is nearest the one delivered by Moses. It is agreed by them all, that the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat, in ^{*Armenia*} ~~America~~; and that all mankind proceeded from three families, of which Noah was the head; this circumstance is frequently alluded to by the ancient historians; the family of Noah was looked up to as divinities and kings; being called the Royal Triad. While the festival of leaving the ark, was held among many of the Eastern nations, regularly once a year.

THE ORIENTAL LANGUAGES.

By the Oriental Languages, the first with which we are acquainted, are understood the Chaldean, the Coptic or ancient Egyptian, the Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac ; to which are sometimes, though improperly, added, the Samaritan, Rabbinic, and Talmudic ; which are only dialects, or particular idioms of the Hebrew.

The Egyptians boasted of being the first of nations ; but it appears evident that the Chaldeans have a prior claim ; of the Chaldean history much has been said, but very little is known ; and that little is obscured by fable ; even the accounts handed down to us by Abydenus, Appollodorus, and Alexander Polyhistor, who received them from Berosus, a native of Babylonia and a priest of Belus, who lived in the time of Alexander the Great, are subject to the same defect ; although Berosus was held, by the Persians, in high esteem, and is frequently quoted by the Oriental fathers, as well as by Josephus, the great Jewish historian. Babel, or Babylonia, is said to have been originally founded by Nimrod, in the year of the world 1771, and 115 years after the flood. It is remarkable that Callisthenes the philosopher, who was in Alexander's retinue when he entered Babylon,

wrote to his friend Aristotle, that the Babylonians reckoned themselves to be at least of 1903 years standing; and Porphyry also informs us, that when Babylon was taken by Alexander, there were brought from thence celestial observations for the space of the above number of years:—so that if these two statements are to be depended upon, the antiquity of Babylon is not exaggerated. Astronomy seems to have been the favourite study of the Chaldeans; and they were, as I mentioned before, descended from Ham, who was held by them in the highest veneration; they called him Amon, raised him in process of time to a divinity, and worshipped him as the sun; from this they received the name of Amonians, and at length they carried their religion, with what knowledge of science they had acquired, into Egypt, Assyria, Phœnicia, and Canaan; hence the Chaldeans are said to have been the first apostates from the truth, although great in worldly wisdom, because they introduced the worship of Ham, or the sun among mankind; which continued for ages the first idolatrous worship after the flood; they were a people, who, with the Egyptians, first contrived or invented, for writing, those signs called hieroglyphics and allegorical symbols; forming the second and third progressive steps towards alphabetical writing; they also strictly preserved memorials of their ancestors, which were described in these characters on their pillars

and obelisks ; and when they arrived at the knowledge of letters, the same accounts were carefully maintained, both in their sacred archives and popular records.

The Mizraim, likewise the descendants of **H**am, when they retired to their place of allotment, attended by their brethren the sons of **P**hut, founded the kingdom of Egypt 2188 years ante **J. C.** in the year of the world 1816, and 160 years after the deluge ; they first settled themselves at **Z**oan, near the entrance of Egypt, and afterwards built **T**hebes and **M**emphis. As I have remarked, the Egyptians boasted not only of being the first of nations, but also the authors of all the science, which, in separate rays, illuminated the rest of the world. To antiquity the **C**haldeans have a prior claim, although the Egyptians were unquestionably the second. It is further evident, that the former when driven from **B**abylonia and **C**haldea, betook themselves to Egypt ; seizing upon **M**emphis, with great ease about 511 years before the book of **E**xodus, in the time of **T**erah, and six years before the birth of **A**braham ; they soon over-ran, and kept the whole country in subjection ; while their princes, the shepherd kings, maintained themselves in Egypt during a period of 259 years, till the native inhabitants at length rose upon them, and drove them out of the country ; after which they settled themselves on the adjoining coast of **S**yria, under the denomination of **P**hilistines. Of the **C**haldean history,

when compared with the Egyptian we are obliged to confess that very little is known ; but of the history of the Egyptians we are certain that, at a period so remote as the birth of Moses, in the year of the world 2433, and less than 700 years after the destruction of the Tower of Babel, the Egyptians were proverbially famous among other nations for their wisdom, their antiquity, and early progress in the arts of civil life, the honour of having invented letters being ascribed to their countryman Memnon, 1822 years before the Christian æra : while the Greeks, from whom all our knowledge of Gentile history must come, with one voice confess that all their learning and wisdom came from Egypt, either imported immediately by their own philosophers, or brought through Phœnicia by the sages of the East ; between the immediate successors of Menes, twenty centuries ante J. C., and the period when Alexander the Great conquered Egypt, there is a wide gulf through which neither the boldest antiquarian has yet been able to establish a path, nor the eye of history to direct its vision : the land of the Pharaoh's was an old country in the infant age of Greece ; and their earliest writers described its grandeur not only as having reached its consummation, but even as beginning to pass away ; while the philosophers and historians who crossed the Mediterranean in search of knowledge, were astonished at the proofs of an antiquity which surpassed all their ideas of recorded

time, and at the appearance of a wisdom, genius, and opulence, of which they could hardly hope that their countrymen would believe the description; while the nations which at present make the greatest figure in the world, and influence most deeply the condition of human nature, had not yet passed the first stage of social life; in fact, whose manners were utterly unknown. The inhabitants of Thebes and Memphis had made a vast progress in civilization, and were gratifying a learned curiosity by inquiries into the constitution of the universe, and into the laws which regulate the movements of the heavenly bodies; as the rise of Egyptian power and wisdom preceded for ages the era of letters, the history of their more ancient kings, like those of the Babylonians and Assyrians, must have been entirely lost, had the architectural monuments of the former people not been constructed of more imperishable substances than were to be found in the alluvial plains of Mesopotamia. Of the actual literature of Egypt itself, properly speaking, we know nothing; we are obliged to rest upon the evidence of the Greeks, who, while the rest of Europe was in a state of barbarism, were receiving all the rudiments of knowledge, from their intercourse with the scholars of Thebes and Memphis; in further confirmation, it is certain that Egypt may, in some measure, be called the academy of Greece, as Pythagoras, Thales, Lycurgus, Solon, Eudoxus, Plato,

with other great men, studied there ; indeed, at one time, a Greek was not accounted truly learned until he had resided a certain period on the banks of the Nile ; conversed with the philosophers on the mysteries of their science ; studied the laws, the government, and the institutions ; examined and explored their everlasting monuments ; and become, in some measure, initiated in the wisdom of one of the most remarkable nations that ever existed. Of the early civilization of the Egyptians the narrative of Herodotus, confirmed by Diodorus Siculus, bears ample proof, when he tells us that separate castes had long been established in that country,—namely, priests, including men of rank, the military, and artisans : the latter comprehending not only husbandmen and labourers, but all the classes which practise those arts necessary to the subsistence and ornament of human life. The medical science, even long before his time, must have been carefully studied, for he adds, “ There are a great many who practise this art ; some attend to disorders of the eyes, others to those of the head ; some take care of the teeth, others are conversant with all diseases of the intestines ; whilst many attend to the cure of maladies which are less conspicuous.” Now, experience and the history of other countries clearly proves to us, that many ages must and does elapse before a state ever thinks of so minutely regulating the various departments of professional science.

It would seem, deeply considering this subject, that the ancient Egyptians were almost as highly civilized as we are ourselves in the present day; it is true, that like ancient Greece and Rome, Egypt does not present us with those beautiful and sublime effusions of poetry, tragedy, comedy, and eloquence, in the delights of which the scholar and the man of science is apt for the time to forget that those states have also long since passed away; but, as far as regards astronomy, the exact position of their principal buildings in reference to the four cardinal points, with one of their sides in all cases turned to the East, to which we may add the delineation of the twelve signs of the zodiac, the traces of which still remain in the temples of Esneh and Dendera, the naming of the principal stars and the grouping of the constellations, we are at liberty to conclude that the Egyptians, at a very remote age, were at least practical astronomers; when, too, we find that all the learning of Thales, by which he was enabled to calculate eclipses, and determine the solstitial and equinoctial points, was acquired from the Egyptian priests six hundred years before the Christian æra; that, at a later period, Eratosthenes was found qualified to measure a degree of the meridian, and from the result to deduce the circumference of the earth to an extraordinary degree of accuracy; and that the day of the summer solstice was then so nicely observed, by means of a well long before dug at Syené, from the

surface of which the sun's disk was reflected entire,—we can hardly hesitate to receive any hypothesis which assumes an astronomical purpose in accounting for the architectural prodigies of ancient Egypt. On their progress in architecture we possess an admirable criterion, in the perfection to which, at a very early period, they had carried an art, that has not only a close but necessary dependance upon scientific deductions : when the magnificent buildings of Thebes were accomplished, and the splendid monuments of her kings erected, with the facts which present themselves to the view of the modern traveller amid the desolations of Karnac and the ruins of Luxor, we must come to the conclusion, that such stupendous works could not have been executed by a nation ignorant of mathematics and chemistry ; neither could the pyramids, the obelisks, nor the monolithic temples, which still meet the eye in every spot between Elephantiné and the mouths of the Nile, have been raised without the aid of such mechanical powers as have their origin in the calculations of philosophy.

The Chaldeans, Egyptians, Phœnicians, and Hebrews, respectively claim the right of seniority ; but the point at this immense lapse of time is not easy to decide. The Chaldeans, who cultivated astronomy in the most remote ages of antiquity, were the first who used hieroglyphics or arbitrary marks in their calculations ; and I have shown that these were the parents or forerunners of

letters: this circumstance with the following greatly favours the claim of the Chaldeans. Chaldea and the adjacent country are allowed by all nations, sacred and profane, to have been peopled before Egypt. The Greek writers and those who copied from them, nevertheless, decide in favour of Egypt; as a distinct nation, having the first claim, it is in some measure natural for them to do so, because their information was derived from the Egyptians themselves. The claims of the Phoenicians, the ancient Canaanites of Scripture, whose language was similar to that of the Chaldeans, are supported by Porphyry, Pliny, Lucan, and other ancient writers,—also by Sanchoniatho; it is at the same time observable, that Chaldea, Egypt, Phoenicia, and Syria, all bordered upon each other, and that a great similarity existed between their several languages; although the Phoenicians do not appear to have a fair claim to antiquity either before the Chaldeans or Egyptians, it is certain that they were the first people who set an example of commercial intercourse between nations, particularly to the opposite shores of the Mediterranean, by which they proved the medium through which the learning, the laws, and religion of the Nile were first planted in Greece: the names of Cadmus and Cecrops continue to represent those missions, or voluntary migrations, which, at a comparatively late period, transported to Europe, from Africa and Asia, the treasures of Oriental wisdom,

associating an imperishable fame with the memory of Athens and the other states of Greece. Indeed, the Phœnicians were a commercial people in the days of Abraham ; and in the times of the Hebrew judges they had begun to colonize ; their first settlements were Cyprus and Rhodes ; thence they passed into Greece, Sicily, and Sardinia ; the fragments of Sanchoniatho are the most ancient specimens of alphabetical writing extant after the books of Moses ; he is stated to have been contemporary with Joshua, 1440 years ante J. C. ; but Sir Isaac Newton places him in the reign of David, 1040 years, ante J. C. ; these fragments, from their being so ancient, have given rise, in some measure, naturally, to the assertion, that the Phœnicians were the first who invented letters and alphabetical writing.

In behalf of the Hebrews, or Jews, it appears difficult to know how such a claim, as that they have any pretensions to priority before the others, can be admitted, especially as Moses was not born till 2433 years after the Creation, and about 670 years after the destruction of the Tower of Babel, when all languages had become mixed and confounded ; the first time we find Hebrew in the Bible is in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, and the thirteenth verse, in the year of the world 2091, and 1913 years before the Christian æra. Abraham and his descendants took the name from the patriarch Heber, third grandfather to Abraham ; but,

before the birth of Abraham, both Chaldea and Egypt were flourishing countries ; the Jewish laws of the Ten Commandments were written 1491 years ante J. C., and the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, thirty-nine years afterwards. The late Mr. Jacob Bryant, of King's College, Cambridge, was of opinion that the Jews were the first who enjoyed the advantages of letters, and the Tyrians and Sidonians next as their nearest neighbours. I can only say, that as Mr. Bryant was an excellent scholar and a scientific man, his opinion is entitled to respect ; at the same time, his great zeal for religion, however proper and amiable in itself, induced him, as a writer, to draw conclusions not justified by proof. In regard to letters and writing among the Jews, as Christians, we are bound to believe that the Old and New Testaments are a divine revelation. Moses not having been born till 1571 years before the Christian æra, particularly as the deluge, by destroying all mankind, excepting one family, writing and letters being unknown among the Jews till 857 years afterwards, tradition otherwise would have been the best knowledge which even Noah himself could possess, of circumstances such as the Creation of the world, &c., which had occurred 1656 years before the melancholy catastrophe of the flood. Moses, whom we are told was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, it is at least highly probable, if not certain, carried the knowledge of writing with him when

he quitted Egypt ; he afterwards wrote the Pentateuch, excepting the last chapter of Deuteronomy, 1452 years ante J. C. ; at all events we are perfectly certain that if the Jews did not derive their knowledge of letters and writing from the Egyptians, they took care to copy from them their idolatrous worship, such as their golden calf and other superstitions. After carefully considering the various claims of the different Oriental languages to the highst antiquity, I feel obliged to decide as follows :—1st. The Chaldean ; 2nd. The Coptic or ancient Egyptian ; 3rd. The Hebrew ; 4th. The Arabic ; 5th. The Syriac.

I shall now conclude this chapter, which, in truth, I have found to be one of some difficulty, with a few observations, dictated by necessity and propriety. The immense length of time of nearly sixteen centuries, or 1572 years, which elapsed from the deluge till the period when Greek history is considered authentic, 776 years before the Christian æra, presented numerous and impassable difficulties to the ancient, and of course must present much greater to modern historians ; the inquirer of the present day, anxious to obtain something like authentic information, is first required to carry back his imagination to an æra many hundreds of years prior to the existence of all written deeds ; and then he is gravely introduced to the gods and demigods who, he is told, had once condescended to dwell on the banks of

the Nile. If impatient of the fables related to him respecting miracles and supernatural personages, he should ask who was the first sovereign who reigned over Egypt, he is encouraged by being told that his name was Menes, and that his history is not altogether unknown; but he soon finds out that the exploits of this prince too much resemble the achievements of the god Osiris; and that the limits between mythology and the annals of a mortal race are by no means fully established; fatigued with vain conjectures, and unable to separate facts from fiction, he may resolve to change his plan, in the hope of being able to thread his way through the dark labyrinth of Egyptian chronology: adopting the philosophical rule, he determines to proceed from the known to the unknown; and collecting some comparatively recent and well-attested facts, of which the date is considered as certain, he obtains possession of one end of a chain which he trusts he may succeed in tracing, link after link, until he shall arrive at the other extremity. He pursues his way, trusting now to one guide then to another; but, unfortunately, he soon becomes convinced that authorities oppose him in every direction; he is not only entangled by fable, but also by conflicting statements and contradictions: as he advances he is further dismayed by the unwelcome discovery, that as his guides became more and more ignorant, their confidence increases in proportion, and their statements abound with

fictions sufficient to stagger the strongest belief. He is now satisfied that truth cannot be obtained on such uncertain ground, and therefore consents to imitate all those who have gone before him ; to build conjectures instead of establishing facts ; to admit what is probable where he cannot find demonstration ; and to allow what is possible where he cannot reach unquestionable evidence : his difficulties augment as he removes farther from the point whence he had originally started ; like the traveller who sets out upon a journey—at the beginning he has sufficient light to conduct him on his way ; but he has not gone far when he finds the day is closing ; the light grows more feeble at every step he takes ; and the shades fall blacker and thicker around him, until he is at length shrouded in total darkness. For my own part, looking forward with the sharp eye and dispassionate mind of the philosopher and historian, I feel obliged to come to the conclusion, that profane history at the earliest period is not to be depended upon, beyond 776 years ante J. C. This I shall prove in my next chapter upon Sir Isaac Newton's admirable principle, " Never to admit for history what is antecedent to letters." We also find that even the Sacred Scriptures themselves, of the Old Testament, were fixed and arranged nearly in their present form (excepting their chronology) by Ezra the scribe, assisted by Nehemiah, after their return from the Babylonian captivity, about 452 years before the

Christian æra*; nevertheless, to the Oriental nations we owe a debt of admiration and gratitude. To the Hebrews, or Jews, we are indebted for the sacred volume of Divine revelation†. It has been remarked, that the Jews were men in religion and children in every thing else; and this observation may be exactly

* On the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity they had so far forgotten the original Hebrew, that it was found necessary, when the Pentateuch, &c. was read in the synagogues, to make an interpretation into Chaldee for the common people. The Old Testament was translated from the Hebrew into Greek by order of Ptolemy Philadelphus (called the septuagint version), 284 years before the Christian æra; and the books of the New Testament were collected into one volume, and translated into Latin by the elder fathers of the church in the second century; but there were no such divisions into chapter, paragraph, and verse, as at present exist; these division and subdivisions were made in after times, by Cardinal Hugo, in the thirteenth century (Latin version); Rabbi Mordecai Nathan, in the Old Testament, in the fifteenth century (Hebrew version); Robert Stephens, the celebrated printer at Paris, about the middle of the sixteenth century (Greek version); and finally by the English translators into English, during the persecution of Queen Mary, called the Geneva version or Bible. The reasons of all these individuals were the same—to make it a book of concordance and reference, by which the text and substance of the Bible has certainly been disfigured.—See *Reeves's Preface to his Bible*, 9 vols. 4to.

† It is a matter of question what was the form of the primitive church and the nature of its government; on this head much difference of opinion exists, not only between the Roman Catholics and Protestants, but also amongst the numerous classes of the latter. It is, however, an opinion, probably the most judicious on the subject, that Jesus Christ and his disciples confining their precepts to the pure doctrines of religion, have left all Christian societies to regulate their frame and government in the manner best suited to the civil constitutions of the countries in which they are established. Fortunately, in the present day, it is beginning to be understood, that as universal charity must be the grand acting principle of a good religion, it may be laid down as a fixed rule, that furious or canting bigots are pests to society, by being injurious to its best interests.

reversed in the case of the Egyptians. To them however, with the Chaldeans, we owe the first, the noblest, the most useful art which, after language, we possess—that of writing, with the rudiments of astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, and architecture.

CHAPTER VI.

RISE AND PROGRESS OF LETTERS, WRITING AND LITERATURE AMONG THE GREEKS, WITH THEIR CHRONOLOGY.

GREECE, called by the Oriental nations, Ionia, by its ancient inhabitants, Hellas, by the Romans, Græcia, and thence by us, Greece, so singularly illustrious in the annals of mankind was of small extent, being scarcely half so large as England; for the whole Grecian continent, including Macedonia, did not contain more than 3850 square leagues, and never had above 3,700,000 or 4,000,000 of inhabitants. It was divided into a number of small states, of which the principal were—

ATHENS.—Said to have been founded by				
Cecrops the Egyptian, in the year of the				
world 2448, and	-	-	-	1556 B. C.
LACEDEMON or SPARTA.—By Lelex				1490.
THEBES.—By Cadmus	-	-	-	1493.
CORINTH.—By Sisiphus	-	-	-	1404.
MACEDON.—By Caranus	-	-	-	794.

Although the above are the received chronological dates, Sir Isaac Newton, in his tables, places the foundation of the various states of Greece, between 1080 and 1006 years before the Christian æra, which, in my opinion, is more correct; I shall consider this question further, as I proceed.

Greece, known at an æra far beyond the history of any other part of Europe, was the first country in Europe, which emerged from the savage state; this advantage it appears to have owed entirely to its readier means of communication with the civilized nations of the East, indeed, it exactly fills up the middle link of the chain formed and continued by Egypt, Greece, and Rome; for the Greek letters, are now found to have been, almost, exactly the Egyptian, (See chapter iv. p. 35,) and from the Greek was derived the Latin orthography, and thence that of all western Europe.

Among the effects of this extreme antiquity, one is particularly remarkable; the oldest traditionary memorials of Greece, relate not to war and conquest, generally the only materials for the annals of barbarous states; but to the invention or introduction of institutions, the most indispensable to political, and of arts, the most necessary to human life; such as the institution of marriage, the production of the olive, the culture of the vine, the sowing of corn, and the protection of bees for their honey and wax: hence while the origin of other ancient nations is matter only of conjecture to the antiquarian, that of the Grecian people demands attention from the historian; it is in vain, however, for us to enquire the precise period when Greece attained a superior degree of policy and civilization, for many centuries elapsed before written records became common, and their traditions are not only vague, but inexplicably mixed with fable. In attempting, therefore, to describe the rise and progress of letters among the Greeks, I have a large field of fable and conjecture to analyze, in order to discover truth from falsehood; it is true the Greeks arrived at the knowledge of letters much later than the Oriental nations; but as all our knowledge of Gentile or ancient profane history must be derived from them, this enquiry not only possesses extreme interest, it is likewise one of great importance.

Sir Isaac Newton, whose sublime genius, in some measure, redeems human nature, lays it down as a rule never to admit for history what is antecedent to letters ; for traditionary truths cannot be long preserved without some change in themselves, or some addition of foreign circumstances, so that in time so many changes take place, that only a few outlines of the general occurrences remain. Of the truth and correctness of this excellent maxim, every day's experience convinces us. It therefore now becomes my duty to find out at what period letters arrived at that state among the Greeks that we are justified in affording them credit.

Cadmus the Phoenician, who is said to have been born and educated in Egypt, when he founded Thebes, 1493, or, according to Sir Isaac Newton, 1045 years before the Christian æra, is reported to have introduced, or brought with him across the Mediterranean, the first sixteen letters of the Greek alphabet ; but this assertion does not appear to be borne out by any proof : to these four were added by Palamedes, during the period of the Trojan war ; or, counting by Blair's Chronology, about 1186 years ante J. C. ; and the remaining four were afterwards added by Simonides nearly 658 years later.

The following is the primeval alphabet, said to have been introduced by Cadmus into Greece when he founded Thebes, 1493 years before the Christian æra.

Large	Small.
A	α
B	β
Γ	γ
Δ	δ
E	ε
I	ι
K	κ
Λ	λ
M	μ
N	ν
O	ο
Π	π
P	ρ
Σ	σ
T	τ
Υ*	υ

Added by Palamedes during the time of the Trojan war, or about 1186 ante J. C.

Z	ζ
Θ	θ
Φ	φ
X	χ

* Professor Sandford, in his translation of the Greek Grammar from the German, to which he has added his own remarks, says that the alphabet of Cadmus had only fifteen letters, being an equal number with the original Hebrew and old Latin, but that the sixteenth, υ, was shortly added.

Completed by Simonides, the poet of Chios, about 530 years ante J. C., by the addition of

Large.	Small.
Ξ	ξ
Ψ	ψ
Ω	ω

and by giving H, η its proper destination, although it is considered by some only as an aspiration.

The completed Greek alphabet of Simonides was used on coins and inscriptions in Attica about 500 years ante J. C.

The following characters were likewise used in the older inscriptions.

For	β	ϵ
	γ	ζ
	δ	θ
	π	ϖ
	ρ	ρ
	τ	γ
	σ	τ
	υ	ϵ

MODERN GREEK ALPHABET.

Large.	Small.	Sound.	Name.	English Names.
A	α	a	Αλφα	Alpha.
B	β	b	Βητα	Beta.
Γ	γ	g (hard)	Γαμμα	Gamma.
Δ	δ	d	Δελτα	Delta.
E	ε	ě	Εψιλον	Eps̄ilon.
Z	ζ	z (sd)	Ζητα	Sdeta.*
H	η	ē	Ητα	Eta.
Θ	θ	th	Θητα	Theta.
I	ι	i (Eng. e)	Ιωτα	Iota.
K	κ	k	Καππα	Kappa.
Λ	λ	l	Λαμβδα	Lambda.
M	μ	m	Μυ	My.*
N	ν	n	Νυ	Ny.*
Ξ	ξ	x	Ξι	Xi.
O	ο	ō	Ομικρόν	Om̄icron.
Π	π	p	Πι	Pi.
P	ρ	r	Ρω	Rho.
Σ	σ	s	Σιγμα	Sigma.
T	τ	t	Ταυ	Tau.
Υ	υ	u	Υψιλον	Upsilon.
Φ	φ	ph	Φι	Phi.
X	χ	ch	Χι	Chi.
Ψ	ψ	ps	Ψι	Psi.
Ω	ω	ō	Ωμεγα	Omega.

* Valpy in his Greek Grammar spells Sdeta, Zeta, and Μυ, Νυ, Μυ, Νυ ; but as the υ is short, I think that Professor Sandfod's plan My, Ny, is preferable.

Now, taking the above statement in the absence of all better information as correct, we find that it was Thales the Milesian, who studied at Memphis in Egypt, and who was reckoned the chief of the wise men of Greece,* that founded the Ionic sect 600 years ante J. C. and was the first who lectured there on astronomy and natural philosophy ; and that it was Anaxagoras of Clazomene, one of the most distinguished philosophers of antiquity, who brought the learning of the Ionic school to Athens : he was succeeded by Archelaus, of whom Socrates was the follower. Writing we know was a considerable time antecedent to this ; for the first written laws of Greece were in the archonship of Draco, about 630 years before the Christian æra ; but it only became general in the days of Socrates ; and it is a remarkable fact, that immediately on the knowledge of letters becoming general, a host of the most excellent writers sprang up in the various sciences of philosophy, poetry, tragedy, comedy, eloquence, &c., forming the first or Grecian age of learning ; while the Athenians in particular then imbibed that exquisite taste for the refinements of language which has made them the wonder and admiration of succeeding ages.

* The seven sages of Greece were Thales ; Solon the wise and amiable Athenian lawgiver ; Chilo of Lacedemon ; Pittacus the deliverer and lawgiver of Mitylene, in Lesbos ; Bias, prince of Priene, in Ionia ; Cleobulus of Lindus, in the island of Rhodes ; and Periander of Corinth.

Herodotus, styled by Cicero the father of history, because he is the most ancient author whose writings of that kind have been handed down to posterity, wrote his nine books of general history in the Ionic* dialect, 445 years before the Christian æra, comprising a space of nearly 300 years. At all events, little dependence is to be placed on any traditionary accounts said to have taken place before the Olympiad, which happened 776 years ante J. C., this being the earliest date at which the ancient authors and historians, whose writings are to be depended upon, began their chronology : added to which there is another admirable reason, the Greek alphabet not having been completed till about 530 years ante J. C. However, this subject will be further considered in my review of the Chronology of Greece.

Other difficulties thrown in the way of investigation, during the rise of Greek literature, are the misconceptions, mis-statements, and practices of the Greeks themselves ; so that, although our knowledge of Gentile history must be derived from them, yet we are required to be extremely careful in receiving their accounts with too much facility ; for the traditions of the Greeks, and also

* There were five dialects in use among the Greeks :—1st The Epic or Homeric, from which was derived the Attic, considered the most elegant ; it was spoken at Athens and its vicinity ; 2nd. The Ionic, spoken chiefly in Asia Minor ; 3rd. The Doric, used by the Spartans, Sicilians, Dorians, Rhodians, and Retans ; 4th. The Æolic, by the Bœotians and Æolians, who lived in Asia Minor.

of the Romans who copied from them, are as ridiculous as they are numerous, and often completely fabulous. From an over-weening vanity the Greeks adopted all foreign history, and supposed it to have been of their own country in very high ages of antiquity. They mistook places for persons ; formed divinities out of titles and attributes ; and gave to their imaginary heroes the names of collective bodies of people ; till, at length, every Grecian mountain acquired its Oreäds, every wood its Dryads, every fountain its Naiad : the sea its tritons and its Nerëids, and every river its god ; the variety of seasons produced the hours ; and the Muses and Graces were the offspring of the genius of the people. Such fabulous statements, often clothed in the most exquisite exertions of poetic eloquence, might almost induce individuals of a warm temperament, even in the present day, to imagine that the satyrs and nymphs were still to be found frisking among the groves, and playing around the fountains ; in short, the Greeks so multiplied not only their deities but also their heroes, that all their common departments are to be set aside as inconsistent and idle. It was this conduct which brought upon Solon, the wise and amiable Athenian lawgiver, the just, but bitter, censure of the priest of Egypt, who accused him and the rest of his countrymen of gross puerility and ignorance ; and compelled Porphyry, the Platonic philosopher, to admit, with astonishment, that

numerous different names, applied to their deities and heroes, were originally all meant for one and the same individual.

The following accounts may be looked upon as entirely fabulous, Deucalion of Thessaly, Inachus of Argos, Ægialeus of Sicyon, with the long line of princes descended from them. No such conquests were ever achieved as those ascribed to Osiris and Sesostris; indeed, the dynasties of the kings of Egypt have completely puzzled all ancient and modern historians, however credulous or anxious to strain a point, by way of respect to the antiquity of the Egyptians. The histories of Hercules and Perseus are equally devoid of truth, with those of Ninus and Semiramis, Saturn, Janus, Pelops, Dardanus, Minos of Crete, and Zoroaster of Bactria. When we remember and consider that Athens, far superior to the other states of Greece in polite literature, is stated, according to Blair's Chronology, to have been founded 1556 years before the Christian æra, and that the other principal states were also founded shortly, at all events, at no great interval of time afterwards, it does appear a very long period that 1000 years should have elapsed before learning became general in Greece. As for Sicyon and Argos, which claimed superior antiquity, as they remained buried in insignificance and ignorance, it is hardly worth while noticing them in an inquiry like the present. In reference, then, to the

others, the subject is one which requires a little patient investigation to solve it satisfactorily.

The Greek leaders, when they founded the various states, appear to have been very little, if at all, better than the heads or captains of small rude tribes; their first attention in a strange country was turned to the means of procuring subsistence by agricultural labour; to protect themselves from the inclemency of the weather by architecture, however simple and rude its first designs may have been; by laws of marriage, and other good rules of manner to restrain their unruly passions; and to study the art of war as a safeguard against their enemies. The constant disturbances which almost perpetually harassed the Greek states, either of an internal or an external nature; their numerous wars, with that rude tumultuous form of public liberty, which allowed all, even the lowest classes, to interfere, in some way or other, with the government, were great drawbacks, if not actual preventatives, to the study of science; in addition to which, we in the present day, with the inestimable advantages of printing, books, paper, &c., can hardly form a fair opinion of the difficulties the Greeks had to contend with, from the want of light and portable materials upon which they might express in writing their ideas and feelings. This I have endeavoured to show, by carefully tracing the various substances in use (See chapter iv. page 37), when, instead of the pen

flowing on the commodious and lasting materials of parchment and paper, the engraver required to be employed on plates of brass, or the chisel on blocks of marble ; for it does not appear that the Greeks were acquainted even with preparing the leaves, or the inner bark of trees, until 550 years before the Christian æra. Thus, we perceive, on a careful examination, that the Greeks had numerous obstacles to contend with of almost every description, calculated to retard learning and improvement. It is found, likewise, that all rude states are extremely slow in mastering the first rudiments of literature ; but when this is once accomplished, their advance is sometimes extremely rapid, which was the case particularly with the Athenians. For my own part I am inclined to believe that the æra of the foundation of the different states of Greece is placed considerably at too early a period. I am aware, that in offering this opinion I am treading on delicate ground ; we know however, that the Greeks, to a great degree, fell into the same fault, common more or less to all ancient and modern states, that of advancing extravagant claims to antiquity, not only ridiculous in themselves without proof, but actually in defiance of it ; besides, we find that the Greek alphabet was not completed till about 530 years ante J. C. ; and it appears difficult to believe how Homer, not only the most ancient, but the prince of poets, could have written at so early a period as upwards

of 900 years before the Christian æra, when the alphabet in which it is said he did write was so incomplete, unless we are satisfied of the truth of the statement, that he only made use of the first sixteen letters. Now, although in the *Iliad* he gives an account of the last year's siege of Troy, and, in the *Odyssey*, relates the adventures and return of Ulysses, we must remember that none of the early Greek writers themselves have undertaken to fix the era of the Trojan war. I must also inquire what materials had he to write upon ; stones and bricks, brass and wooden tablets were at that period the only articles in use ; if, however, we fix the foundation of Athens by Sir Isaac Newton's *Chronology*, and place the life of Homer 250 or 300 years later, the above difficulties would be in a great measure got rid of. That the period of his life is involved in great mystery and uncertainty is evident from the fact, that not less than seven great cities of Greece claimed first, and then contended for the honour as the place of his birth, namely, Smyrna, Rhodes, Colophon, Salamis, Chios, Argos, and Athens. It appears that his residence, after he became blind, as he states himself in those lines of the *Hymn to Apollo*, which have the testimony of *Thucydides* to their authenticity, was in the island of Chios. I shall conclude this subject by adding, that we are informed by *Cicero* that it was *Pisistratus*, the tyrant of Athens, who first introduced the works of Homer to the notice of the Athenians,

about 545 years ante J. C., and who had them arranged in the manner in which they now stand, directing them to be read at the feast of Minerva, called Panathenæa.

I have now traced the rise of literature in Greece. We find that it was Thales who, after studying at Memphis in Egypt, founded the Ionic sect; and, by giving lectures on astronomy and natural philosophy, first drew the attention of the Greeks to polite learning. He was immediately followed by Anaxagoras, who fixed himself at Athens; he, again, was succeeded by Arche-laüs, and then by Socrates, the great founder of moral philosophy, a brief review of whose life will be given in a following and distinct chapter. We find that when the knowledge of letters became general a host of excellent writers sprang up in the various sciences, and that the Athenians in particular then imbibed that exquisite taste for the refinements of language which has made them the wonder and admiration of succeeding ages; accordingly, it is at this period that the first or Grecian age of learning is considered to have commenced, about the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, and extending to the reign of Alexander the Great, or rather from 480 till 320 years before the Christian æra; when flourished the historians Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon; the physician Hippocrates; the philosophers Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Democritus; the orators Demosthenes, Æschines, Lysias, and Isocrates;

the lyric, tragic, and comic poets Pindar, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Menander, Anacreon, and Theocritus ; the statuaries Phidias, Praxiteles, and Lysippus ; the painters Zeuxis and Apelles, with several others.

CHRONOLOGY OF GREECE.

THERE is not a circumstance of Grecian history which has been more laboured at by learned men of ancient and modern times than its chronology, and yet none remains more uncertain and more unsatisfactory : but as history cannot hold together without some system of chronology, it appears an indispensable duty of the office I have undertaken to offer my opinion, with an explanation of the grounds on which it is founded. When a nation is first emerging from barbarism, all views are directed to the future ; past transactions are considered of so little consequence, that a point from which accounts of time may originate is not an obvious want ; so that the deficiency is beyond remedy before it is felt. Undoubtedly, however, poetry and song were the first vehicles of history, and the earliest mode of promulgating laws. The oldest Grecian prose writers

known to the ancients themselves, were Cadmus of Miletus, and Pherecydes of Scyros, stated by Pliny to have lived in the reign of Cyrus, king of Persia. Herodotus, styled the father of history for the reasons before mentioned, simply describes the term of events, by saying they happened so many hundred years before his time, which scarcely fixes them within half a century. The more exact Thucydides commonly reckons backwards from the year in which the Peloponnesian war was concluded; but his account goes only a little way. A very short time after, in the days of Socrates, Hippias the Eleian, published a catalogue of the victors in the Olympic games; but we are informed by Plutarch, that his catalogue had little reputation for accuracy. Ephorus the disciple of Isocrates, in his chronological history of Greece, from the return of the Heracleids, or descendants of Hercules, according to Blair 1104, and to Newton 824 years ante J. C. to the 20th year of Philip of Macedon, digested his calculations of dates by generations only; and even those famous marbles, whose fame has so much exceeded their worth, said to have been composed 60 years after the death of Alexander the Great, brought from the Levant for the Earl of Arundel, make no mention of the Olympiads, but reckon backwards by years. The first systematic use of the Olympian catalogue for the purpose of chronology. was made by Timæus Siculus in his general history, published soon

after the date of the Arundelian marbles ;—his work is unfortunately lost. About 40 years later Eratosthenes, librarian of Alexandria, to Ptolemy Lagus, one of Alexander's generals, who, when he ascended the throne of Egypt, assumed the cognomen of Soter, digested a chronological system by the Olympiads, so much more complete than any before known, that he has had the honour of being considered the father of scientific chronology ; but his work, and also that of Apollodorus the Athenian, who followed him, are likewise lost. Strabo, perhaps the ablest of the ancient antiquarians, gives abundant proof that he had no faith in any chronology, which undertook to arrange history, until the period of the Persian invasion. Pausanias reports contradictions, in regard to the arrangement of time and pedigrees in ancient Grecian history, freely confessing his inability to reconcile them ; but Plutarch's testimony is most explicit : “ Hundreds ” he says “ continue to this day endeavouring to correct the chronological dates, and yet cannot bring them to any consistency ; ” however, it appears as if doubts had decreased in modern times, in proportion, not to the means for discovering truth, but to the loss of means for detecting falsehood. The chronology at present most received, has been formed, principally, from the marbles brought from the Levant for the Earl of Arundel, together with some fragments from Eratosthenes, Apollodorus, and Thrasyllus, preserved chiefly

in the chronicon of Eusebius, and the stromata of Clemens Alexandrinus; those marbles been proved in some instances false;* and what can we think of the authenticity of the above chronologers, when such authors as Strabo, Plutarch, and Pausanias, coming after them, never deign to quote them; but, on investigating the same subject, declare that they were unable to satisfy themselves, and report the uncertainties that occurred. The chronology built on such frail foundations is, also, in itself improbable, and even inconsistent with the most authentic historical accounts. All these considerations induced the great Newton to attempt the framing of a system of chronology for the early ages of Greece, from the best historical traditions of political events, compared with the most authentic genealogies; and he endeavoured to verify it by recorded astronomical observations: this work, which was printed after his decease, he had not finished for publication, otherwise it would have come to us less liable to objection; at the same time, great credit has been given to it. According to Archbishop Usher, whom Blair has followed, and whose chronology appears, at present, to have obtained the favor of learned men more than any other, the Deluge happened 2348 years before the christian æra, and in the year of the world 1656; the kingdom of Sicyon is

* See Mitford's History of Greece.

stated to have been founded 259 years afterwards ; but the next historical event in Greece is the founding of Argos by Inachus 233 years later than the founding of Sicyon by Ægialeus : but Sir Isaac Newton, on the contrary, says, that Sicyon and Argos were founded together, about 1080 years ante J. C., which makes a difference of 1009 years in the first case, and 776 in the second. Thus Blair's chronology proceeds with numerous breaks or intervals of hundreds of years, during which it is not even pretended that we know any thing of what was going on in Greece ; while none of the early Greek writers themselves have undertaken to fix the æra of the Trojan war ; and, so far from having any sure grounds for the date of events said to have taken place at so remote a period, the most important circumstances of the legislation of Draco, and of Solon at Athens, are uncertain ; although the former is, on probable grounds, placed at about a century and a half after the 1st Olympiad, or 630 years before the Christian æra. Towards the 64th Olympiad, above 250 years after the victory of Coræbus, or 523 years ante J. C., books were still so little common, and the means of multiplying them so little known, that Hipparchus, to promote the knowledge of letters among the Athenian people, caused moral sentences in verse engraved on marble to be set up in the public ways of Attica. Herodotus, the earliest of the Grecian prose writers whose

works are handed down to us, flourished about 70 years later. The Olympian catalogue was first published by Hippias the Eleian towards the 100th Olympiad; that of Timæus Siculus above a hundred years after; and Eratosthenes, called the father of ancient chronology, did not flourish till the 133rd Olympiad, or 248 years before the Christian æra. The Greek, or rather the Athenian laws were not even committed to writing till the archonship of Draco; neither did letters become at all common, nor chronology acquire accuracy, above a short time before the Persian invasion. The first Olympiad*—that which Coroëbus won—is of universally acknowledged date, 776 years ante J. C. On this point Sir Isaac Newton and all the above chronologists agree; consequently it becomes the fixed authentic period of Greek, or rather profane history. Thus we perceive, that although the great authors of antiquity, with far more ample materials, and a more intimate knowledge of their country than we possess, could not extend their chronology further than 776 years before the Christian æra, with

* The festival of the Olympic games was held at the termination of every fourth year, at the temple of Jupiter at Olympia, near the town of Pisa in Eleia; it consisted of foot races, wrestling, boxing, chariot races, horse races, &c. The other games of Greece were the Delphian, Isthmian, and Nemean. They acquired considerable fame and importance, although they never arrived at the splendor of the Olympic. They were also held at intervals of four years, each taking its year between those of the Olympic; so that every summer there was a festival common to the Greek people, with an armistice enabling all who desired to attend.

even a slight degree of certainty. Modern writers, after a lapse of thousands of years, and vast destruction of records of every description, have not scrupled to frame a system of chronology, not only extending to the most remote antiquity, but even to the creation of the world itself. I do not mean to assert that the creation of the world is placed at too ancient a date---far from it; indeed, the speculations of geology would place the age of our globe at a period of antiquity far beyond the commonly received opinion. I am only anxious to draw a broad line of distinction between mere conjecture and that which has good evidence to support it. Could such individuals as Strabo, Pausanias, and Plutarch, rise from the dead, I do not know whether they would be most surprised at the presumption or credulity of modern writers on this subject. I have endeavoured to investigate our system of chronology very carefully and dispassionately, and have been obliged to come to the conclusion, that many hundreds of years must elapse from the Deluge before we can attempt, with any degree of certainty, to fix chronology. It is true, that habit may sanction, and custom may induce us, to receive a different system; but when investigated, it will be found to consist of mere arbitrary assertion devoid of proof. I can only account for it in that propensity so powerful among human beings, to supply their want of real information by the fertility of their own conjectures; but

my plan in this work will not allow me to follow such a course ; for I determined to content myself within the limits of real knowledge ; rather choosing to confess our ignorance than to give to mere opinions the authority of facts.

The Author is sorry that particular circumstances prevented his paying that minute attention to the printing which he wished, in consequence of which the following two or three errors have occurred.

ERRATA.

Page 13, line 25, *for* “ to it ” *read* “ it to.”

— 17, — 5, *for* “ turned ” *read* “ termed.”

